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American Enterprise Institute
Studies in Political and Social Processes

A Conversation with Vladimir Bukovsky

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Introduction

Vladimir Bukovsky is well known as one of the most visible and luminous dissidents from the Soviet Union. He has written a truly remarkable book, *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter,* published by Viking Press in 1978, which has received widespread review in this country.

Mr. Bukovsky was invited to Washington to receive a Friends of Freedom award at a dinner sponsored by the Coalition for a Democratic Majority. Other award recipients included the American Federation of Labor, Freedom House, the *Wall Street Journal,* plus other prominent Soviet dissidents. It was through the Coalition for a Democratic Majority that Mr. Bukovsky visited the American Enterprise Institute.

Among the many remarkable aspects of this book was one thing that struck me in particular as someone who is quite interested in the subject of citizenship and where it is going in a modern world. Mr. Bukovsky writes: "Neither atom bombs nor bloody dictatorships nor theories of containment or convergence will save the democracies. We who were born and have grown up in an atmosphere of terror know only one remedy: the position of a citizen."

That passage should serve as a background to the reflections of Mr. Bukovsky.

Robert J. Pranger
Director of Foreign and Defense Policy Studies
American Enterprise Institute

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I think that any author experiences some embarrassment when speaking about his book, because in writing it the author presumes that he has expressed himself in full, and the book will speak for itself.

It is especially difficult with this kind of book, which is not really a description of prison life, as everybody expects of me. It is a book about the conflict between the individual and a state, and a very mighty state, I would say. At the same time, it can be useful for people here because it is an explanation of the possibilities of winning in a desperate conflict. As I understand it, the world is confronted with the same problem constantly, a problem that has led to international terrorism and the difficulties in relations between West and East. At any time, we have to decide how to cope with it and what line of behavior will be most useful.

I am constantly asked questions like, How far can the West go in pressing its points? How far can we defend certain rights and freedoms in the Soviet Union? Would it be harmful to do so? And to what extent could it harm somebody there? This is the range of problems I deal with in my book.

To explain this I must explain briefly what kind of theory or position was developed by the so-called dissidents in the Soviet Union as a result of purely practical situations.

After so many years of terror in the Soviet Union and of attempts to oppose and resist this terror, we realized, as a practical matter, that any violent or armed resistance would never help us. Many attempts had been made in Soviet history, and they never helped; they just bred more and more violence and terror in the country.

It was quite obvious to us that violence was not the answer for us. In a mighty state where everything is subjugated and controlled

by the state, there is really no way to create an underground framework of organizations or armed groups to overthrow the regime. The population is too frightened and terrorized—their spirits have been broken down. Our system, our authorities, evolved as a result of violence.

As far as I can understand, in the beginning Marxists did not proclaim violence as the only possible way to build socialism. They tried to create the kind of system they believed in, but as our society resisted these attempts, their system gradually evolved into the terrible monster of oppression. The main thing for them was that the goals justified any means of achieving them, so they inevitably ended up with what they have.

The main things we stressed when our dissident movement started was that the means could not be justified by the goal, even if the goal was great, and that any kind of underground or violent resistance would inevitably put us in precisely the position as are the Communists.

The main concern of the movement was what kind of tactics, what kind of strategy, we could use in opposing the state without aggravating the situation. We concluded that the only possible strategy was the role of a citizen, which is difficult to explain briefly. It sounds a little ridiculous—How is it possible to be a citizen in such a state? By reading the law of our country carefully, we discovered that, for propagandistic purposes, our authorities and our ideologists created legislation that seemed to be very democratic. Possibly because they would not like to make a bad impression on the stupid people in the West, they made the law as democratic as that of any other country. There is no point in our legislation forbidding political activity against the Communist party. There is no question about it, anyone who started such activity or even said something about it would be put in prison, but that is the practice, not the theory.

Strictly speaking, we are on the legal side, and our authorities are violating the law. We exploited this point as far as we could, appealing constantly to the law and opposing those who violate it. This kind of a positive stand helped us to create a broad movement in the country.

The planning problem is not only technical and tactical, it is strategic, because no movement can oppose this kind of system with purely negative reactions; there must be something positive. And it is a positive thing, in an oppressive system, not to accept oppression. The authorities find it a bit schizophrenic and difficult to grasp.

In an atmosphere of terror, one suddenly realizes that the authori-

ties do not have all of the power, all of the strength. Strength actually lies in the willingness of somebody to submit to pressure. In other words, the power is not created from the barrel of a gun, as Marxists put it; it is created by the people who are ready to comply with the demand. And if the people withdraw their compliance, the authorities suddenly have no power.

That was the main idea of the dissident movement. Something that generated support at that time, and that became a source of emotional strength, was the discovery of Stalin's crimes. For me, personally, it was the turning point of my life—and I was quite young at that time, I think thirteen or fourteen years old. It was the turning point as well for the majority of the people. Suddenly everybody realized that we were all, willingly or unwillingly, accomplices to the crimes—not only those who were directly involved in these crimes and oppression, but even those who were simply silent about them. It created a strange situation, because after Stalin's crimes were disclosed, everybody started to question each other. Where were you at that time? What did you do? Why did you not try to oppose them? Did you know or did you not know? And so on and so forth. The members of the older generation tried to explain their situation by saying that they did not know exactly what happened; others, more honest people, said that they simply were afraid.

I remember during that twentieth party congress, which was a turning point because of the disclosure of these crimes, somebody sent Khrushchev a note, a question written on a piece of paper: "Where were you, Comrade Khrushchev, at that time—you, personally?" And Khrushchev read it through the microphone and asked, "Who sent this note, please stand up." Nobody stood up. And Khrushchev said, "I was in precisely the same place you are now." And he thought that he explained it brilliantly. Actually for my generation, it was a rather poor explanation. Anyone who got to that room, who got that close to power, ought to have been brave enough to stand up and say what was on his mind. Nobody invited him, nobody actually pushed him, into that position.

The moral feeling among my friends at that time was, "No matter what happens, I would like to be able to say to my children that I personally did whatever I could. I opposed the injustice and violence in my country whenever I could, just to be on the right side. It is not my fault that I could not change the whole system, but at least I have done as much as I could, personally." That was our feeling in the dissident movement.

I think that the experience of this kind of resistance is useful for

the West. I see no real difference between the U.S. position when dealing with the Soviets and the dissidents' position inside the Soviet Union. It is really the same problem. If you in the United States opposed them with the same means, with the same weapons, they use, you would eventually lose your own qualities and adopt their qualities. You would be accomplices to the crime.

We constantly see the same dilemma and the same results when the West tries to deal with the Soviets. Unfortunately, the Western world has not yet found the proper way to deal with the Soviets.

There are many examples to illustrate this. A family of Russian Pentecostals lived in the American Embassy in Moscow for ten months, which is unprecedented in itself. These people had been to the American Embassy several times within the last fifteen years, trying to get information about emigration and to find any way of getting out of the country. They were punished. Some of them were sent to psychiatric hospitals, others to labor camps. One of their sons was killed, another is still serving in a concentration camp. The last time they went to the American Embassy in Moscow some managed to rush through the guards, but one of the sons was arrested, and he was tortured and beaten severely. He managed to communicate how he was treated to those in the embassy, so they decided not to leave.

They have created a problem for the U.S. ambassador, who would not like to encourage incidents like this. He understands that if this family should succeed, it would encourage hundreds, if not thousands, of others to repeat their actions.

At the same time, as a representative of the United States, he ought to remember the values his country defends. He keeps these people as if they were in prison. He permits no interviews with the press, including the American press. For almost six months, NBC and ABC crews in Moscow tried to obtain permission to interview these people, but they were refused. A special official of the American Embassy, who is permitted to speak with these people, tries constantly to discourage them and to persuade them to get out of the embassy. That is the policy of the American Embassy. The American officials are perfectly aware of the fact that if this family is thrown out, they will immediately be arrested and put into psychiatric hospitals, prisons, and camps. Still, they put as much pressure on this family as they can. The family is permitted to receive no correspondence, no letters from abroad, from different religious organizations.

But that is only one small episode. A much more typical scene, which they can observe now, sitting in this embassy (they write me

letters, secretly, almost as if from prison) is the ten to fifteen people arrested every day in front of the American Embassy, trying to get into the embassy for information. What is really surprising to me is the behavior of the American officials in Moscow.

According to the so-called consular convention, signed by the United States and the Soviet Union, in both countries citizens have a right to go into the embassy of the other country to obtain information of this sort. But the American government never tried to insist on this point, never tried to insist on fulfillment of the treaty. They accept the situation, permitting these people to be arrested right in front of them.

Why? That is the main difference in our cultures and in our psychology. In your country, as in any free country, you are brought up with the idea that compromise is a good thing, because it helps to live and to survive—it is one of the cornerstones of your society. In the Soviet psychology, it is quite a different thing. We are brought up with the idea that compromise is just a manifestation of weakness. Whenever we are confronted with a conflict—when I say, "we," I mean those of us brought up in the Soviet Union—we know for sure that we must press as far as the other side is ready to retreat.

And so we see two different types of behavior. The Western side is constantly losing because it retreats, it makes a compromise, and it expects the Soviet side to do the same. On the Soviet side, the contrary obtains; the manifestation of weakness of the free societies is just an incentive to press forward and forward.

I think this is a very dangerous situation because, in fact, you are not prepared to back down all the way, and I can visualize a moment when your government, or any other free government, will decide not to back down any farther. But the Soviets, with their previous experience of causing the West continually to retreat, would never understand this feeling; they would continue to press forward. And this situation could create a world conflict.

That is one thing. Another side of this problem is a moral one. Western people, brought up with the idea of freedom and human rights, and never having dealt with the Soviets, are quite ready to forget about their own values. If they think that is good diplomacy, they are wrong; it is very bad. They are going to lose, and lose constantly, and when the next round of negotiations comes along, it will be even tougher, because the Soviets will be more adamant every time.

And the last thing is, why should the United States try to sign new treaties and agreements if it is not prepared to enforce, to fulfill, the previous ones?

I have tried, in my book, with the examples that are available to me, to show the pattern of behavior in these conflicts, and to show the only way to win the conflict. I called it the position of a citizen. It is the position of an American citizen who observes his own laws, who believes in his own values, who sticks to them, no matter what, and who refuses and rejects all the sly and shrewd things about diplomacy and all the wrong notions about ways of deceiving the Russians. The citizen is just insisting, openly and quite simply, on his own values and on his own beliefs.

That is, I think, the best—also, maybe the simplest—way of dealing with the problem, the one that will bring the greatest return.

Questions and Answers

Robert Nisbet, American Enterprise Institute: Sir, in what degree of status and of respect would you say the ideas of Marx and Lenin are held today by intellectuals and by the people in the Soviet Union? Are they believed in and respected, or are people, including the intellectuals, more and more skeptical and disenchanted?

Mr. Bukovsky: Well, I have been surprised that, in my two and a half years outside the Soviet Union I have met far more Marxists and Communists than in my thirty-five years in the Soviet Union. [Laughter.]

There are no genuine Communists in the Soviet Union. Those who join the party in our country are just trying to find the best opportunity for promotion, because anyone who is not a member of the Communist party cannot be so much as the head of a laboratory in a research institute or the editor of a paper. Any good job is impossible unless you are a member of the party.

A popular joke in the Soviet Union has it that no person can have all of three qualities: honesty, intelligence, and party membership. If you are honest and a member of the party, you are definitely stupid. If you are honest and intelligent, you cannot be a member of the party. If you are intelligent and a member of the party, you cannot be honest. [Laughter.]

Abe Shulsky, office of Senator Daniel P. Moynihan: I was wondering to what extent you can proceed with this strategy of trying to rely on the legal protections that are written into the Soviet law. To what

extent do you find that the legal procedures are really obeyed when anyone tries to invoke them, and to what extent can the authorities simply dispense with these procedures when they find them inconvenient?

Mr. Bukovsky: That is a very complicated thing, because the authorities never follow legal procedures, so the procedures would not protect anyone at all, that is true. But at the same time, any country, no matter what kind of terror or disorder is reigning in it, still must have some limits. Even under Stalin, with all the unrestricted terror, for example, the interrogators had to obtain a confession. If a man were not ready to confess to crimes, they could not put him in jail. They tortured people, they beat people, they kept people, interrogating them for weeks without permitting them to sleep. But unless they obtained a confession, they could not do anything legally. I would say that the terroristic and the totalitarian regime is very bureaucratic, and it has endless legislation and regulations and other things, which are terribly difficult for the officials to follow.

At the same time, with all these strange regulations and laws, all the officials know that they have a lot of enemies in their own departments, or in other departments. If anyone noticed that they failed to carry out the letter of the law, they could be reported and put into the same situation as any prisoner. They would be arrested.

That creates a very strange kind of a game, an intellectual game. A person plays it against the law, against these people, appealing to the law. And more likely than not, it would not influence the authorities themselves, but it could help win a lot of points. The most important is the influence it would have on one's surroundings.

In some minor points, it is possible, quite possible, to achieve a victory against the Soviets by insisting on this legal side, and they would give what was demanded. On the major points, of course, they could not. But it depends on how many people are prepared to demand the point and to press for it. Whenever a substantial number of people presses for something, the government must accept it.

One of the strangest things is why the hunger strikes in the Soviet prisons are still very influential. For a long time no one could understand why that form of protest worked. Strangely enough, in a system like that in the Soviet Union, no one can be permitted to die on his own. If they decide to kill someone, that is all right, but he cannot kill himself because someone would have to be held responsible for that.

It is very strange. When raising a point about the law and insist-

ing on it, no one ever knows when and why they will break down. More likely than not, they do eventually break down, provided that enough people press the issue.

This is what happened with regard to emigration. Fifteen years ago, to say something about emigration to Israel or to the United States (for Lord's sake) would immediately be treated as high treason. And it is still treated that way, psychologically and ideologically, but not legally. Now they permit some quotas, a certain number of people to emigrate. Why? Because so many thousands of people pressed them in regard to the legal situation. And the legal situation, even in Stalin's time, was quite clear. To demand to go abroad was not a crime.

Werner Dannhauser, American Enterprise Institute: Mr. Bukovsky, I admire your practice so much that I hope I misunderstood your theory. What you seem to be saying is that one must categorically eschew, or not resort to, violence because one becomes like one's opponent.

But that brings to my mind another totalitarianism, and I am sure that I am not the only one who in no sense regretted that the conspirators tried to kill Hitler. Our only regret was that they failed. And I do not think their success would in any way have made them like Hitler.

I wonder whether you would address yourself to that question.

Mr. Bukovsky: It is difficult for me to say what would have happened in Germany if Hitler had been killed. That is obviously not my subject. I would tell you one thing: If Stalin had been killed in the 1930s, nothing would have changed. That is the main point—it is not a way of dealing with a situation. It achieves nothing.

For example, imagine how many true Nazis there were at that time in Germany—many more than there are Communists now in the Soviet Union. What would you do with them? You can kill Hitler; that is justified. You can kill his general staff. You can kill the major figures in the ideology, but you cannot kill millions of people; otherwise, you would be no better than the Nazi leaders. I mean, you can hate them. You are quite justified to hate them and to resist them, but to kill? In the Soviet Union there are 16 million official members of the Communist party. Would you advocate killing 16 million people. No.

Violence is not a way of achieving anything. When this Nazi situation began in Germany in 1933, that was the point for the people to reject this new situation. That would have helped much more than anything else. If the people had resisted it in the first place, there would have been no Auschwitz or other disastrous things.

Dr. Dannhauser: May I ask one further question on this?

Mr. Bukovsky: Yes, sure; come on.

Dr. Dannhauser: Since the death of Stalin did lead to considerable changes in the Soviet Union, might not the earlier death of Stalin have led to earlier changes in the Soviet Union?

Mr. Bukovsky: No, I do not think so. Stalin's death is still a mysterious thing; nobody knows whether he was killed or died naturally. There is some evidence that he was killed, because the situation was quite ripe for him to be removed. The whole machine of the party apparatus realized, at last, how dangerous it was for themselves to have this constant terror and self-destruction.

I myself believe that he was removed. And this shows that the death of a leader in our country does not in itself herald change, whereas when a change is coming, when it is in the air, then a way will be found to remove the leaders.

I am constantly asked, for example, what will happen when Brezhnev dies. Nothing will happen, because Brezhnev means no more than any other district secretary of the party; the system means much more, and persons mean nothing.

Angelo Codevilla, office of Senator Malcolm Wallop: Your strategy is then to demand everything that the law allows.

Mr. Bukovsky: Yes.

Mr. Codevilla: And you count on the fact that the law is, at least literally, benevolent, although applied hypocritically. You have some reason for doing what you do because, for example, the latest Soviet constitution has even admitted the possibility that the state exists to serve the whole people and not simply the revolutionary part of the people. But can you conceive of the possibility of the state deciding to do away with hypocrisy and to become openly, legally oppressive? Couldn't it legally deny the right to emigrate and legally deny the right to do many other things that you speak of?

On the subject of violence, I wonder if you would comment on that part in the third volume of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*, in which he speaks of the liberation—the liberation of the spirit, above all—that took place in his last camp when the Ukrainians came and began to kill the stool pigeons.

Mr. Bukovsky: Soviet legislation, whenever and however it would be changed, could not deny every freedom. It is quite easy to deny freedom in practice and very difficult to deny it on paper, not only because it would be bad propaganda to do so, but because one cannot formulate the precise limits of these things.

Imagine the situation if tomorrow, in a matter of hours, the whole constitution and all the legislation were canceled, if the only rule in the country were the wish of the Central Committee, and they had only to write it down. What would happen next? We have approximately 150 people on the Central Committee, who would have to define among themselves the limits of their power and the meaning of all their decisions. Nothing would be resolved, because the decisions of the Central Committee, in Soviet history, have always generated so much controversy among the members that they would be overwhelmed by the flood of problems—minor problems, small problems —every time they had to make a decision. Any society has millions of problems every day, and the Central Committee, in this case, would be broadened immediately to the size of the whole government. Millions of people would have to be accepted into it, and so there would be no difference between the present government, and its size, and this new Central Committee. It would be just a change of titles. To regulate its own employees and officials, the Central Committee would start to issue different injunctions and bylaws and other things. And eventually it would develop precisely the same system.

I cannot visualize a situation in which legislation is enacted like that—in which any wish of some person is a law. It could not work, it is so contradictory and so difficult in practice. That is one problem.

Another problem, as I said, is that the Soviets are so clever they would never do anything that would make such a bad impression all around the world. It would destroy all their supporters, all those naive people who still believe in all this socialism and communism. It would be so self-destructive for them, it is not worth doing.

Is there a second part to the question?

Mr. Codevilla: The role of violence? Specifically, were you talking about a rejection of violence in principle—or about the necessity to make means proportionate to ends, and not simply rejecting one kind of means.

Mr. Bukovsky: I am speaking about the proportion, of course, because there are such things as wars. People do push and do violent things. I am speaking about minimizing such things as far as possible,

and I would say that, in a political context, violence is not justified. I would not have been justified in trying to kill Khrushchev in his time, or Brezhnev in his. No one would be justified, even if we knew what kind of atrocities he committed, because it would not help.

I can justify any person defending himself by violence against violence; I can justify him in a legal sense. But in political life, in society, I would say that it never helps, unless some public forces have developed in the country and are opposing this system. Imagine that I had a device, right now, to explode the Kremlin with the whole party congress inside it. If I did that, how would it change the country? In no way. Nothing would change. The system would go on. The only way of stopping it is to develop throughout the country different public forces that would grow and grow and would exert more and more pressure on the system. In this case, there would be no need for violence, because, with the pressure from inside, the system would change and break down.

Paul Smith, editor of *Problems of Communism*: You were doubtful about the impact of a change in personalities, and you may want to change social forces. I would like to ask you about attitudes in one element of society particularly—blue collar labor. How strong a sense of class identity is there among Russian blue collar laborers, and how does this affect their receptivity to the constitutional principles that you advocate?

Mr. Bukovsky: Right now, we have a remarkable development: workers in the Soviet Union are beginning to be more politically active. Their main concern, of course, is the situation of workers. Approximately a year ago, they made their first move, announcing the creation of a free union for the defense of workers. Strictly speaking, it could not be called a free union or trade union, because people of quite different trades are gathered together. But the impact they created on our society is remarkable. They have managed to attract hundreds, if not thousands, of workers, and their membership—which is changing, of course—is maintained on the level of several hundreds. This is very significant in a country in which it is still regarded as a crime to organize in a union.

This first group that announced the creation of trade unions was treated very severely; at least eleven of them were arrested immediately, and some of them are still in psychiatric hospitals. But it did not stop this development, and there is evidence that these groups and this movement are growing in the country.

I would not say that it was a feeling of class that moved them to initiate this union; rather, it was a feeling of despair, because the situation of the workers is much more desperate than that of the intelligentsia or other groups—a remarkable thing in a country that proclaimed itself a workers' state. They are much more oppressed and deprived of rights. The Soviet Union is still a very stratified society, and those who are workers are regarded as failures. Those who manage to obtain an education are certainly upper class; they are treated much better, they are better supplied, and they have greater opportunities. Those who are workers are just failures. Because of this, their feeling is not very much a feeling of class, I would say; it is the feeling of people who have decided to defend themselves because nobody will do it for them.

S. Frederick Starr, Kennan Institute: As I understand you, your explanation for the power of the Soviet state rests not on the might of its leaders, but on a kind of psychology of docility or passivity. What I want to know is whether you think this is due to human nature or to some peculiar factors in Russian or Soviet life. If the latter is the case, are these factors liable to be changed or softened by economic or social development in the Soviet Union or by contact with other societies?

Mr. Bukovsky: I think it is human nature, more than any peculiar character of the Russian people, that makes any totalitarian power possible, and it rests on the docility of the people. You would understand it better if you took into consideration how many millions have been executed in previous years. Within sixty years, according to our estimation, at least 66 million people have been killed. The reign of terror was so strong that you could not blame the people, even the Russians, for being passive and frightened. Even now they cannot believe in any possible good development in their country. They are pretty sure any kind of activity on their part would be punished immediately, and there are not so many people in our country, or in any other, I am afraid, who would risk their life just for the sake of saying something openly. When I was in Norway, I remember an older person asking me how many of the dissidents are speaking openly. I said there were not so many, really, in a country of 260 million population. And he said that was the case there as well. He was a member of the resistance during the Quisling period in Norway, and now everybody says that they were members of this resistance, but at that time they had just a handful of people.

That is quite understandable because nobody wants to die just for the sake of saying something. It is more in human nature to find a way to accommodate to a situation and to live with it. There are always some possibilities for improvement in one's personal life, and it is still possible to live quietly and to live, more or less, happily.

I would not blame anybody for accommodating. It is quite natural for human beings to behave in this way. Economic disasters in our country, which are constant, did not change this factor much. On the contrary, I would say, whenever times were difficult, even when the people were starving, they did not create a revolutionary situation. When people are starving, they are much more interested in obtaining a piece of bread than in changing the system.

I would not say that ups and downs in the Soviet economy would change the political climate much. In our time, when it is a little more liberal than the Stalin period was, all the shortages and the changes in the economy are reflected in the people's mood, of course, but the extremes of mood that coincide with these economic fluctuations are not so great; they would not create an explosion.

The possibility of influence from another country is great, and it is another factor that must be studied and understood. People here in the United States do not understand that trade relations with the Soviet Union are not the symbol of peace. I have heard so many times, from business people and others advocating good trade relations, that trade is a mighty weapon in establishing good relations with the Soviet Union, and possibly a way of softening the Soviet leaders. I would say that is nonsense, because trade with the Soviet Union is just exploited by the Soviet rulers for military purposes. The people never receive whatever the United States has sold them. It is just used for the whole apparatus in the Soviet Union. The only real consumers of Western goods are the party bureaucrats, who have special distributors, so-called closed party distributors of goods—places where they can be supplied with all the better Western imported goods.

But at the same time, the influence of trade relations is not limited just to the exchange of goods. It is much deeper and more important. One of the things that must be kept in mind about trade is that it is an interference in internal affairs. It is. We have to face it. The most important thing to remember is, on what side are we going to interfere, on the side of the people or on the side of the rulers? It is best to keep that in mind during negotiations for trade treaties with the Soviets.

I would like to give one small example. I remember that in the mid-1960s—and I really describe it at greater length in the book—

there was a split in the leadership of the Soviet Union over the economy, because, as we often do, we had an economic crisis. After Stalin's death, there was a desperate situation. When Khrushchev took power, many influential people around him suggested that he make economic reforms, which meant a return to the era of NEP (New Economic Policy), a return to a small degree of capitalistic development, more decentralization, more incentive for the people, and more freedom for management, which could help the situation.

This suggestion created a split between the so-called party bureaucracy and the state bureaucracy, because the party bureaucracy understood too well that this new development would eventually create a situation where the party would have no control over the economy, and that would result in a loss of political power.

The party bureaucrats opposed this development as far as they could. These things were discussed in the Soviet paper in a very muffled way, but they could be followed. Certain experiments were started. Some collective farms were permitted to be governed freely, without control, just to see what would happen, and the people were permitted to be paid for their real work. Remarkably, the production of these farms rose, say, sevenfold immediately. It was amazing that it was published in the Soviet press. Many changes were expected after that.

But of course the party leadership was not interested in this reform at all, and so they suggested another way out—economic treaties. They suggested launching a so-called peaceful policy line, extending trade relations with the other countries of the world. In this way they could obtain all the needed goods from the West by means of trade, rather than by reforms, dangerous reforms.

And the West was stupid enough to accept the Soviet initiative and to broaden trade relations, which killed the whole experiment in the Soviet Union. Eventually, all of the so-called economists (as opposed to ideologists) were either arrested or dismissed from their jobs. All the experiments were closed, and there is now no hope for these economic reforms.

That is a good illustration of how trade with the West killed an important development in the Soviet Union.

Max Kampelman, attorney, Washington, D.C.: I would like to pursue the direction of some of these recent questions and take it perhaps a little bit further.

We see here a very powerful state that you believe cannot be met or matched with any kind of internal violence. Now the world recog-

nizes your own personal actions and those of your fellow dissidents as immensely heroic personal acts. My question is whether you see these acts also as political acts. And this, in turn, leads me to ask if you see any prospect for significant internal change within the regime, short of, let us say, international catastrophe. If you want to comment on that possibility, it too would be welcome.

MR. BUKOVSKY: When we started our movement, we really had no political aims. We did not formulate any political platforms or slogans. It was a more human position, more moral, let us say, than political. But it appeared to have an immense political impact on the whole system. And I would not be surprised if the dissident movement eventually developed into something more politically defined. That is one of the things we expect to happen in the near future. It takes some time for the people to become politically mature, especially in our country, where any political activity was forbidden.

But prospects for change in the Soviet Union are not connected only with this development; they are connected with many others. The main problems of the Soviet Union, from the dissidents' point of view, are national problems, religious problems, and workers' problems.

Because we have approximately 100 different nationalities in our country, most of them subjugated and captured by force, the development of national feelings and movements for national independence is very strong now. I am speaking about the Baltic states, the Ukraine, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. These areas are particularly troubled with national problems. I am speaking about minorities like the Crimean Tartars, who were deported from their homeland to Central Asia, or the Volga Germans, who were expelled from their own territory and scattered. These people are of course a potential threat for the regime. They are active in their political opposition to the regime, and they number millions of people. The development of nationalism would contribute to the changes. It is rather dangerous because it can lead to an explosion from time to time. National movements and national feelings are rather explosive.

Religion is another problem. We have more than 40 million people who could be counted as religious in our country. Although religion is no longer forbidden, attending the churches and being active in religion is still regarded as disloyal. Despite this, people are attracted to the churches. It is a constant problem for the government, because religion creates an alternative ideology, and the Soviets do not like to have any alternative to their ideology. The Polish example

offers one of the clearer manifestations of this tendency. In Poland, religious feelings, connected with the Roman Catholic Church, are very strong.

In our country, religious feeling is also very strong and could show itself in a drastic way. Still, some large groups of believers are regarded as criminals just for their belief, as demonstrated by the case of the Pentecostals who are sitting now in the American Embassy. Their sect and their religion are forbidden, as are a certain group of Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, and others. These groups represent a large number of people.

The movement of workers, as I mentioned before, will broaden and develop very quickly. It will be one of the major problems within ten years.

All of these factors contribute to the pressure inside of the country. With help, they could change the situation to such an extent that there would be something like Poland in the Soviet Union. That would automatically change the whole climate in Eastern Europe. If in Moscow we had the Polish situation, then in Poland we would have something like Finland, and so on. The whole situation would shift. That is the development I would expect as a result of these pressures, but, once again, I would like to underline, only if they are helped, and not opposed or obstructed.

A catastrophe is the last thing I would like to see, because the most probable catastrophe is a war between China and the Soviet Union. As happens in any country during an emergency, the situation would be exploited by the authorities to destroy all the achievements we have made over the last ten or fifteen years. All those who are troublemakers for the Soviets would be sent to the front lines, to be killed there, and nobody would be blamed for their deaths.

Albert Shanker, American Federation of Teachers: I would like one clarification, and then I have a question. The clarification: You more or less created an analogy between violent resistance within the Soviet Union and an American military buildup, and you concluded that we would end up being like the Soviets. Were you advising against a strong military stance by the United States? Or was your point that we had to fight with more than a military buildup, that we had to use our values and ideas as well?

Now the question that I would like to raise deals with exchanges between various groups in the United States and the Soviet Union. I would like to present a specific case in point. We have an association of political scientists in the United States that will not have its meet-

ings or conventions in states like Florida or Illinois, because those states have not ratified an amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteeing equal rights to women. On the other hand, this same organization has agreed to have its international conference in Moscow, even though there is a general recognition that rights in Moscow, not just for women but for all groups, are severely restricted. But the justification there is that holding such an international meeting in Moscow would further liberalization in the Soviet Union and that these exchanges are necessary to provide some support and protection and communication with dissidents in the Soviet Union.

I would like to know what your opinion is of that.

Mr. Bukovsky: On the first point, speaking about this violence and the problem of armament, I did not object to any strong military buildup. Military buildup has nothing to do with violence, actually. Traditionally, we still regard cannons and tanks as something close to violence or having to do with violence. In fact, they are one of the negotiating points of our times. That is why we must have these things, just to be at least equal when negotiating. If the free world disarmed, it would invite the Soviets to seize as much as they could. Of course, I am not advocating disarmament or unilateral disarmament; far from it.

Speaking of these political scientists who are going to boycott certain states but not Moscow, well, that is a typical hypocrisy, I would say. Right now you have a much more alarming situation with the Olympic Games, which will be in Moscow. Only a few people realize how dangerous it is. Some friends of mine looked through the American newspapers of 1936, when the Olympic Games took place in Berlin, and they discovered in the *New York Times* such headlines as "American Tourists Like Third Reich," and other things. It will be the same in Moscow.

The symbol for this Olympics is, very shrewdly, a bear, a Russian bear, with the Olympic sign. The implication is that the Soviets, a little bit awkward and sometimes rude, are still very good-humored, and that we can get along with them. This message will be sold to the world.

To improve the image of the Soviet states abroad, the government has started a so-called clean-up operation in Moscow, sending out, imprisoning, or exiling those who could make trouble when the Olympic guests arrive in Moscow.

They would like to rid Moscow and other sites of the Olympic Games of anybody who is prepared to speak sincerely. In this way

those who come for the games will have a totally false impression of the people and the country.

They are also going to restrict emigration for the time of the Olympic Games. As they announced recently, they cannot cope with the problem of entry visas for the Olympic Games and at the same time issue exit visas for those going out. Because of that, they obviously must stop emigration from the country for the time being, and I am pretty sure they will not renew it after the Olympic Games are over.

More than that, they have already announced that they will limit the number of guests going to Moscow to something like 100,000 people. So that they can better observe the tourists, they decided—explaining it in terms of shortages of rooms and hotels—that any person can stay in Moscow only for three days and will then be shipped across the country for other tourist attractions. In this way it appears that at any given time, there will be only 20,000 people in Moscow, far fewer than the normal number of tourists.

Another funny thing—it is not funny, but it is worth mentioning—the Olympic symbol souvenirs and other things are being manufactured now by prisoners in the labor camps. They can be made very cheaply that way and they can be sold to all the stupid Americans who are coming to Moscow, sold for currency. Currency is the main attraction for the Soviet authorities. In 1980 when visitors buy these souvenirs, with the awkward bear and the Olympic symbol on them, they may be sure they are buying a product of slave labor.

We have campaigned for the removal of the Olympic Games from Moscow to other places—for example, to Montreal. The mayor was more than happy to accept the new Olympic Games for Montreal; all the equipment and facilities are still available. But we have met with remarkably little support so far from the people, from governments, from public forces. So far I would say this campaign was successful only in two countries, in England and in Holland. In the United States it is not successful, presumably because so many people are interested in having these Olympic Games.

Herbert Stein, American Enterprise Institute: You have given some illustrations of this point, but you said earlier that there was hope for improvement of conditions, or change of conditions, provided we help; and you have given some examples, mainly negative, of things that we should not do. But I wonder if you would say something more affirmatively or systematically about how you think we could help to bring about change in the Soviet Union.

Mr. Bukovsky: We are speaking mainly about moral support and support in terms of publicity for all these developments in the Soviet Union. Speaking of the workers' problem, it would definitely help to have the support of trade unions. If it is easy to have the support of unions in this country, it is not easy to have it in others. In England, for instance, I spent a lot of effort trying to recruit this support and I failed, because the English trade unions would not like to spoil their special relations with Moscow. The same is true in Germany, and in France, and partly in Italy. Our workers, who really expected support from their brothers in other countries, feel betrayed and discouraged by it. The influence of a trade union movement across the world on the situation of workers in the Soviet Union and on the development of the workers' free unions would be enormous.

Speaking of trade, I would expect people here to be more realistic about trade relations and to remember that it is an interference in our internal affairs, which could change the situation either to one side or to another. I would like this trade, of course, to be restricted as much as possible, and whenever any trade deals are accomplished, I would like some assurance that the goods traded would not be used for the further exploitation of the Soviet people or for the further strengthening of the oppressive Soviet system.

In other words, I would rather you did not sell us handcuffs, directly or indirectly.

In all these relationships, I would like to have a stronger, more open position from the Western side. I am definitely against so-called quiet diplomacy, which is just a disguised collaboration. I would like to see a review of the Helsinki agreement next year in Madrid, as something different from what we had in Belgrade. I would not like to have the repetition of this Belgrade betrayal, and I hope that the Western governments will be much stronger at this next meeting.

That is, briefly speaking, what I can say now, what we expect of you.

Dr. Pranger: I would like to ask you a question, but first I will remark on the handcuffs, for those who have not read the book. When Mr. Bukovsky was brought out by airplane, the KGB officer turned to Mr. Bukovsky, who was handcuffed, and said, "You should note that these handcuffs are made in the United States."

Now, the question I would like to ask you concerns the Soviet legal profession. One of the very interesting things about your book is the relationship you had with the public defender system. You alluded to a growing group of Soviet lawyers who are involved, rather coura-

geously, in cases such as yours. I wonder if you could speak about that situation of the legal profession. Are there changes going on there?

MR. BUKOVSKY: Unfortunately, I have not so much to say now on this point. At a certain moment in the development of our movement in the Soviet Union, we had a group of lawyers who really tried to defend us according to law, which was surprising in itself, in the history of Soviet trials. They made such an impact on the whole Soviet legal profession that at one point the deputy to the minister of justice took their part, took their side, and tried to support them.

The whole development was built on a certain item of legislation, which said that the lawyer cannot recognize the guilt of his defendant if the defendant does not recognize it himself. Before this, lawyers usually were used by the prosecution just to support the prosecution, and were expected to say as much about the guilt of the defendant as they could. All they could do for the defendant was to ask for some understanding of his personal problems or point out some other conditions that could be taken into consideration.

The brave stand of this group of lawyers was very important for us at that time, but the authorities reacted rather quickly by expelling these people from the advocate associations and by doing other things. Most of the people I mentioned in connection with this development are now out of the profession.

Unfortunately, this development did not receive any support from lawyers abroad. It is a remarkable thing for a lawyer to be expelled from his profession just for a good defense of his case, but somehow it was overlooked by the world. This phenomenon is now very much reduced in our country. We still have some lawyers who are trying to defend, rather than prosecute, but their number decreases from day to day, because they are expelled and forbidden to take these cases.

DR. PRANGER: We would like to thank you, Mr. Bukovsky, for visiting the American Enterprise Institute. We admire your courage and your suggestions, your recommendations, about how we might assist as private citizens. I think you have demonstrated the power of the position of the citizen. And we would all do well to take your example. We thank you again very much and wish you the very best.

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A Conversation with Vladimir Bukovsky is an edited transcript of a discussion held at the American Enterprise Institute with the well-known Soviet dissident. Mr. Bukovsky explains his theory of the role of a citizen, describes how Soviet-Western relations have hindered the development of economic and social freedoms in the Soviet Union, and offers insights into the attitudes and experience of Soviet citizens, particularly of workers. In a searching dialogue, Mr. Bukovsky and AEI scholars and guests examine such topics as nationalism and religion in the Soviet Union, the degree of status currently accorded the ideas of Marx and Lenin, and the philosophy of Soviet dissidents. Among the views Mr. Bukovsky expressed are the following:

- "By reading the law of our country carefully, we [dissidents] discovered that, for propagandistic purposes, our authorities and our ideologists created legislation that seemed to be very democratic. . . . Strictly speaking, we are on the legal side, and our authorities are violating the law."

- "The symbol of this Olympics is, very shrewdly, a bear, a Russian bear with the Olympic sign. The implication is that the Soviets, a little bit awkward and sometimes rude, are still very good-humored, and that we can get along with them. . . . In 1980, when visitors buy these souvenirs . . . they may be sure they are buying a product of slave labor."

- "In your country, as in any free country, you are brought up with the idea that compromise is a good thing. . . . In the Soviet psychology, it is quite a different thing. We are brought up with the idea that compromise is just a manifestation of weakness . . . that we must press as far as the other side is ready to retreat."

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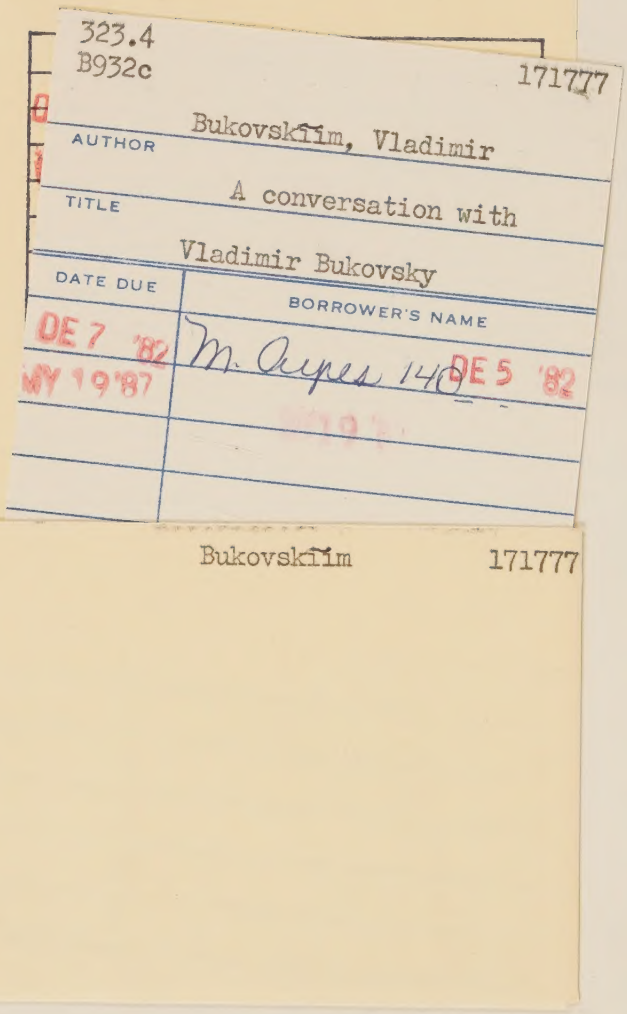
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